

JOSH HARDER
10TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND LABOR

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

131 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4540—PHONE
(202) 225-3402—FAX

4701 SISK ROAD, SUITE 202
MODESTO, CA 95356
(209) 579-5458—PHONE
(209) 579-5028—FAX

harder.house.gov

November 14th, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Minority Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
2322 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

I write today to request a hearing on wildfires and the need for public utilities, such as Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), to invest in climate resilient infrastructure to help prepare for natural disasters. California is on the tip of the tip of the spear when it comes to the effects of climate change as well as the failure of our existing infrastructure. Although we're dealing with the most immediate effects of these problems, other states will soon face the same issues. It's important that Congress takes this seriously and begins to devise solutions.

California is only midway through its fire season. While the fires we've experienced so far have been less destructive compared with the last two years, we've seen an unprecedented number of power outages issued by PG&E with more than 1.5 million Californians without power at one point. The impacts of climate change, including the severe winds toppling trees and arid temperatures are all factors that increase the severity of wildfires, but decades of mismanagement and lack of infrastructure investments have also contributed to this problem.

The wildfires and power outages are disrupting vitally important services my constituents and other Californians rely on every day – hospitals need power for surgeries, laboratory exams, and radiology treatments for patients; schools need power to maintain the food that feeds our children and; last but not least, air quality monitors need power to operate – at a time when we should be the most concerned about air quality, these monitors are being compromised due to power outages. According to reports, this year's wildfires will cost California \$80 billion in total damage and economic losses ravaging more than 260,000 acres of the state. Clearly, the cost of inaction is too great.

As climate change continues to worsen and our electrical infrastructure falls further into disrepair, we will see more and more deadly electrical events across the country. It's time for Congress to start leading. Holding a hearing on this and calling in the relevant parties to answer for inaction is a critical first step.

I urge you, Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden, to hold a hearing on this vitally important issue. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "J" is large and loops around the "o". The "H" is tall and the "a" is small. The "r" and "d" are connected, and the "e" has a long, sweeping tail.

Josh Harder

United States Representative (CA-10)